

FACT SHEET: KEEPING AMERICA SECURE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY  
(The initiative on Biological and Chemical Weapons)

January 22, 1999

(The following Fact Sheet titled "Keeping America Secure for the 21st Century: President Clinton's Initiative on Biological and Chemical Weapons Preparedness" was issued by the White House on January 22, 1999)

Following is the White House fact sheet:

(begin fact sheet)

THE WHITE HOUSE Office of the Press Secretary January 22, 1999

FACT SHEET

Keeping America Secure for the 21st Century: President Clinton's Initiative on Biological and Chemical Weapons Preparedness

President Clinton has made defending the United States against chemical and biological weapons a top national security priority. The possibility that outlaw nations and terrorist groups will seek to use these weapons represents one of the greatest threats to American security in the 21st century. The Administration has sought to defend against these threats through diplomatic and military means abroad and through increased preparedness at home. In his Fiscal Year 2000 budget -- which includes \$10 billion to defend against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction -- President Clinton will propose major increases in funding to strengthen America's defenses against the threat of biological and chemical weapons.

**Vaccine Research and Development** -- The Department of Health and Human Services will receive an additional \$43.4 million for research and development to defend against biological weapons -- almost a 150% increase. The bulk of it -- \$30 million will go to research on new vaccines, including vaccines for smallpox and anthrax for eventual use in the national medical stockpile. The Food and Drug Administration will receive \$13.4 million for enhanced regulatory review of vaccines and therapeutics. In addition, the National Institutes of Health will receive \$24 million for research on diagnostics, vaccines, antimicrobials and genomic research.

**Public Health Surveillance** -- President Clinton will propose that funding for improvements in the public health surveillance system and public health infrastructure increase by 22% to \$86 million. This will translate into increased lab capacity, strengthened epidemiological capabilities for state and local health departments and more resources for communications and information technology. The Center for Disease Control will create a network of regional labs to provide rapid analysis and identification of select biological agents.

**Metropolitan Medical Response Systems** -- President Clinton will propose increasing funding by almost 400% to more than \$16 million for Metropolitan Medical Response Systems. These local emergency medical teams will respond to a biological or chemical weapons emergency. Twenty-five new such teams will be funded.

President Clinton's new initiatives build upon a record of accomplishment in confronting the dangers of emerging threats at home and abroad.

Beginning in fiscal 1997, the Administration began funding a five-year effort to equip and train first responders in the 120 largest metropolitan areas in the nation.

Last year, the President proposed and Congress approved of more than \$300 million in additional funds for weapons of mass destruction preparedness. Among the initiatives begun were the renovation of the public health surveillance system so medical personnel can detect a biological weapons release early and save lives. This appropriation also went to establish the first ever civilian medical stockpile, which will contain necessary medication to treat those exposed to biological or chemical weapons. Funding levels for the medical stockpile will be maintained in the President's FY2000 budget.

The United States led international efforts to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention, which we signed in 1997, and American diplomats are currently working to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

The Clinton Administration has also pursued cooperative programs and activities aimed at reducing the threat of proliferation of biological weapons expertise with nations of the former Soviet Union, spending \$30 million in these areas during the last five years. The President's budget proposal seeks more than \$150 million to expand these efforts over the next five years.

Through military action against production facilities for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and Sudan, the United States has acted to degrade and eliminate the ability of these two nations to build weapons of mass destruction and supply them to terrorists.

(end fact sheet)

NNNN